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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 2

THE UNITARIAN AS A CULTURAL BEING—*John Hayward* 3

CREDO—*John W. Cyrus* 7

PAGAN TRENDS IN OUR MODERN CULTURE—
Myron W. Fowell 11

BOOK REVIEWS:

Essays in Unitarian Theology 12

Why I Am A Unitarian 13

INTRODUCING OUR CONTRIBUTORS 15

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EDITORIAL

When the charge of bigotry is made men and woman of good will are immediately called to vigilence. This is inevitably so as we can readily see when we begin to think of the evil that has been unleashed upon the earth in the form of bigotry. Wars have been fought, nations have been divided, communities have been hideously defaced in the service of bigotry. More than that, lives have been twisted and warped and ruined by the malicious slander of the bigot's tongue. The bigot has the power to turn beauty into ugliness and ugliness into a kind of beguiling beauty so potent is the poison in which he has traffic.

Moreover, it is difficult to describe the degree of hypocrisy that a self-professed democracy has achieved if and when it is ready to declare that any segment of its population is disqualified from public office, including the presidency, because of its creed. To wage a campaign against Mr. Kennedy because he chooses as his religious affiliation Roman Catholicism is to say openly, publicly, and without shame that democracy has already capitulated to the forms of religious and political tyranny that once it steadfastly defied.

There is, nevertheless, a danger quite as real that we must not permit to pass unnoticed. The right and obligation of every man to ask intelligent questions, to satisfy himself about the common good and wherein that common good lies, must be a cherished and frequently invoked right. It is only cowardice that men of weak heart make into virtue to withhold questions of relevence regarding the beliefs and idealogy of presidential candidates. Such questions must not go unasked (let the offended cry bigotry if they will)! For the accusation of bigotry is quite as vicious as its practice. We must satisfy ourselves that there is in our hearts and so far as we can influence public opinion, in the hearts of others no bigotry. Then we must in good conscience put those questions that need to be put and steadfastly refuse to be silenced by those who use the charge of bigotry not in the cause of truth but as a weapon for their own ends. As the late A. Powell Davies once reminded us: "The world is now too dangerous for anything but the truth." There is an appalling volume of slander being directed against Vice President Nixon and Senator Kennedy at the present moment. It is, then, incumbent upon every one of us to seek the truth in these pre-election days, and without bigotry or fear of the charge of bigotry to cast our vote with utmost integrity on November 8.

Reflections on Thanksgiving

November is hallowed by the occasion of Thanksgiving, when this year as in other years we as a nation pause to take account of the bounty of our living. President Lincoln signed the proclamation for a day of "public prayer, humiliation, and fasting" in September 1861 and, again the following year, he proclaimed a day of thanksgiving. In 1863 following the victory of Gettysburg, he called upon the nation in the midst of civil strife to recall the many blessings that were theirs. Then he wrote: "No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the precious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

Perhaps we can capture some of the authentic mood and flavor of Thanksgiving from excerpts of other proclamations signed by President Lincoln a century ago.

"It is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the supreme government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisements; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions, in the full convic-

(*Continued on page* 15)

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The Unitarian As A Cultural Being

John Hayward

The shape of the whole Geneva program first caught my eye when I sat down to decide what I wanted to bring to you in this lecture; and in a way, this shape has stayed with me through all of my preparations, and will stay with me throughout my remarks.

Let me confess that I was dismayed at the prospect of all that was going to have to be said and done in these five lectures. You have heard an expert speak expertly on "The Unitarian and His Family". I am supposed to speak this morning on Culture, and I presume that means not only the appreciative side of culture (that which can be absorbed), but also the creative side, the ways in which one can contribute to culture. Tomorrow Mr. Anderson will speak on our responsibilities as citizens; then Professor Johnson will speak in behalf of all the things we should do as churchmen; finally, Dr. Bond will speak on the problem of personal integration in face of all these diverse tasks. And as I look at all this I feel not like a whole Unitarian, but more like one-tenth of a Unitarian, realizing how few of these things, even without hearing the speakers, I can really fulfill in myself. Even as a cultural being, I am deficient at many points. So the very presentation of the program in this way raises a problem that I want to raise with you: the problem being that Unitarians characteristically think of salvation in terms of the accumulation of talents and skills. By salvation here, I mean nothing mystical (although ultimately there are mystical overtones to it); I mean simply a conviction expressed in words or deeds, or both, of life's ultimate meaningfulness in spite of its suffering. I believe it is characteristic of *most* of our churches, *most* of our laymen, and *most* of our ministers that salvation is understood in terms of the accumulation of powers; powers as family people; powers as cultural beings; powers in social action; powers in churchmanship, and powers of personal self-integration. This is a long, long order. If personal salvation depends on such a varied expertness, the problem arises as to who can honestly claim to be saved.

Salvation by accumulation

I would submit to you the thesis that belief in salvation by accumulation is false and that it is anti-religious. And I have three reasons for so believing: The first is there is no success in accumulation. The second is that the glorification of accumulation is arrogant. The third is, that many good men and women who belong in the church are defeated by the goal of accumulation. They are discouraged before they even begin. Let me speak in detail of these three concerns.

Let me state that there is no success in accumulation in relation to the field of Culture. The simplest way to put the point is to say that the more you know and the more you achieve, the more you also know how much you don't know, how much you haven't achieved, and the sharper your hunger to know and to achieve. *Human skillfulness is a completely bottomless pit,* and the people who are most gripped by the urge to be justified by their deeds are the people who are most restless in their lives. Up to a point this restlessness is a completely wholesome and healthy thing, for without it no great achievement, no passing beyond the level of mediocrity would ever take place. But always the person who is so driven, if he is really great, if he has some true spark of genius within him, senses the great and dark mystery ever deeper and wider surrounding the little lights of his own cultural meaning. He who penetrates this dark knows how fragmentary his resources are in the face of life's mysteries and frustrations. Given the gifts that he has, given the skills he has developed, there is always a tremendous gap between what he can offer for the building of life and for the solace of its cruelties and what is actually needed. His supreme creative task is to find the courage to work and produce continually amid a sharpening realization of his own imperfections. He has to believe in himself without presuming to believe that he has "arrived."

I turned to the second point I outlined earlier: That the glorification of accumulation by a pretense of having "arrived" is arrogant. People who have, as it were, "made good" in their fields love to be told every Sunday morning how "good they have made". So our churches are loaded with sermons which glorify human achievement as the "be all" and "end-all" of life. The substance of these sermons is that accumulation is

a success and all you who have arrived—bless you, we are glad to receive you into the Unitarian fold, we are glad to have snatched you out of the burning brands of orthodoxy. Now a really good man in his field, and I do not necessarily mean a man who makes headlines, a really competent man, is never so tempted. Let me speak especially for the professions which deal directly with people and with their troubles. I am thinking of law and medicine, of teaching and the ministry, of the arts, of politics, of social work and various kinds of institutional work. If you are directly and professionally responsible for the well-being of people *you should* have some sleepless nights. You should wonder rather frequently if what, in your best judgment, you have done has really been the right thing; and you should have some evidence that on some occasions it has not been the right thing. This is true in all walks of life, not only in the professions. Every time we get together we influence one another in a tremendous variety of ways, and I am sure that *we do not always influence each other for good* especially in what I am doing right now, in the realm of speech. God protect and humble the man who is a persuasive speaker! Because it is by speech that we not only influence each other, but that we express many of the strongest powers of our ego; and does this always work for good? I don't think so! Again, man's spiritual problem is to go on working creatively and critically even under the honest realization that none of his skills justify his existence or give him leave to believe that he has "arrived."

Now I think the greatest group in our churches are not the people who are made arrogant by the goal of accumulation, nor are these the people who have learned the deep truth that there is no success in accumulation. The *largest* group is composed of the many good men and women who are *defeated* by the goal of accumulation. I can dramatize this for you by giving you a little litany, an incantation of names of heroes and saints of our movement; most of them are not Unitarians, but we have drafted them, so to speak, and these people appear in our sermons and in our conversations either as ideal types whom we should follow, or as solid writers whom we should read, or as great cultural exponents whom we should observe, listen to and pay attention to. Although you may not recognize the names of all of these people, each of you could make a similar list: Alfred North Whitehead, Eric Fromm, William James, John Dewey, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, David Riesman, Sigmund Frued, Carl Jung, Karen Horney, the Menningers, Dylan Thomas, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Camus, Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky, Albert Schweitzer, Mahatma Ghandi, Harry Ashmore and, best of all, Pogo. You could add to the list indefinitely. What does this mean? It means that our preachers generally hold up the great names and the implication is either you will be as great or you are not a good Unitarian. Some times this works very well as a kind of vicarious atonement. By being in an institution that chants these names there may be something wholesome about directing our attention to such models of virtue. By being in a congregation whose attention is so directed we have a kind of vicarious up-lift. But I think most of us are too smart and too humble to let it happen this way. Most of us are essentially defeated by the incantation of the roster of the saints. We are defeated either because we say, "I'm never going to read Whitehead's *Process of Reality* and so I guess I'll just have to be that much less of a Unitarian," or defeated even doubly by going out and trying to read *Process of Reality* and after having gone through ten pages deciding, "that's not for me, I really am not a Unitarian". I have talked to many Unitarian laymen who for this reason actually feel "out of it"; the Unitarian Church, they feel, tolerates them by letting them in. All of this business adds up either to pride ("we have arrived") or to defeat ("I am unworthy").

The Church vs. arrogance

I would offer to you as humbly, but as forcefully as I can, that this is just the opposite from what the church should be doing. We have turned religion around precisely backwards. I am saying the church should take the competent people, the knowing people, who know their competence, and beat them over the head for their arrogance; and I am saying for the hundreds who have not publicly or privately recognized powers or gifts that the church should speak to them a word of love and comfort. But our church does exactly the opposite! It honors the competent and it defeats the incompetent. It condones the simple arrogance of feeling that you have "arrived", the complex arrogance of the lure of perfection and the destructive arrogance of a condescending and loud authority over the people. The church should so honor a great Perfection, a great Holiness, that all the perfections and holinesses of men are seen in their

proper perspective. And if the holiness and perfection which are indelibly in human beings are put forward as *the final* and *ultimate* perfection, then the church should cry, "No, you cannot get away with that kind of arrogance!" But for the hundreds, for the thousands who do not feel so competent within themselves, to whom we have said time and time again—"Go thou and do this, do that", whom we have exhorted to the point where we have paralyzed them, for them the church should be a great fountain of love and comfort. I do not mean by this the church should bless mediocrity. I mean that the church should see blessing as it truly is, as available to all men regardless of their talents good or bad, a blessing which when appropriated, when felt, when transmitted, makes it possible for a person's talents, however great or however small they may be, to be released. Martin Luther had a phrase, "Grace does not ask whether or not good works should be done. It has done them already". I am talking, therefore, about the mediation of a blessing to all men, so that whatever they have within them is made available both to themselves and to others. Therefore, I cannot stand up before you this morning and exhort you—"Be ye more cultured!" "Learn this, Learn that, Look here, Listen there, Read that!" I am talking to you now as a minister, and I say if you receive the Kingdom of God then all these things will be added unto you to the degree to which you are by nature capable of receiving them; and beyond that it doesn't matter. If you have it in you to play the cello at all, your religious orientation, your religious community should make it possible for you to play the cello to the limit of *your* ability. That will satisfy you and what more do you ask?

Love is force taking form

I would like to try to spell out what I mean more concretely by the "blessing" of the poor in spirit and also the meaning of the obligation of the church to humble the proud. I must first lay before you, as ground work, three articles of faith that underlie the conclusion to which I wish to come: the first article of faith is that all the energy in us and in the world around us is best expressed by the ever-abounding concept of the Love of God. This love, this energy is not just force, it is force taking form. The puppy doesn't run anywhere for his supper. He runs to his mother's side. The plant grows to its appropriate size and shape. It doesn't grow in general. Even the electrons dance in a circle, and Man with his myriad dances, his forms, his shapes, his activities, yearns toward a harmony and a proportion and a relatedness. Now this pressure of love is in all things everywhere. It is irresistible, it is undeniable, and this is why even in our worst moments, in our greatest times of impoverishment, the urge to create is always a small fire burning. This is not something you can turn off; by virtue of being alive you inherit this glory, this obligation, this burden.

A basic anxiety

Second Article of Faith: (when I say article of faith I mean a combination of observation and reasoning and faith, never faith alone). We are born to suffer, to decay, and to die. This is a basic anxiety which no science, no art, no religion will ever fully remove. We cannot help being anxious for the fact that every life *must* include a good deal of suffering; that every life, just about the time that its powers seem strongest, goes over the top of the hill and must decline and decay; and finally that every life must be lost. This breeds within us a tremendous and, I think, ultimately ineradicable anxiety. These two articles of faith make an interesting contrast. On the one hand there is the knowledge of creative goodness all around us, the knowledge that we ourselves must participate in it; on the other hand there is the equally sure knowledge that the whole thing, as far as each of us individually is concerned, is to fall to pieces, all to be lost, all to be wiped out. We have no assurance of immortality. We have no assurance of resurrection.

A man must choose

Third and final Article of Faith: We are also free agents, people capable of choice. To be sure, choices are always hedged around by all kinds of conditioning. Our choices are not absolute, but finite. Our most important choice is whether we shall be more responsive to the love of God and the urge to be creative, or whether we shall be more responsive to the demands of anxiety. Shall we take risks or shall we yield to the demands to build up hedges and fences and battlements and towers to protect ourselves against suffering, decay, and death? It is my observation both inward and outward that most of our energy is put toward the allaying of anxiety. Most of our energy is simply put toward the securing of life against those forms of evil from which in the long run we can never be secure. Too small a portion of our life is a flower-

ing of the Love of God in us as our own love, as love that has to be brought out, has to be produced because we can't help ourselves. We have been able to shut that love off to a tremendous degree by virtue of the great pressure of our anxieties. Now, what does the church say on the basis of these articles of faith?

The church looks at its people and realizes that all of them, the competent and the incompetent, are living what Thoreau called "lives of quiet desperation", and the church says to those who feel consciously impoverished, weak of soul, empty of courage, unimaginative, unknowing, bereft, spending most of life in the rat race doing that which does not satisfy, or, as the Bible says, "giving your labor for that which is not bread" —the church says to them, "blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven", "Blessed are they that mourn," "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy!" By this "sowing in tears and reaping in joy" I am not referring to future life, though possibly that is the original meaning of the biblical reference. I am referring to a basic dynamic in human life. There is one condition by which those who are impoverished can reap this blessing—that condition is that they open themselves, that they take off their masks, that they drop their defenses. Our anxiety is so great, and our intuition of personal impoverishment is so ineradicable that we have put up masks, not only to hide from ourselves this impoverishment, but above all, to hide it from other people. But you cannot talk through the slits of a mask. So the religious concern here is that the defenses be dropped, that the church be a place where, if a person feels miserable, if a person feels inadequate, it is not un-Unitarian to say so—especially for the minister to say so. This is the hardest thing for a minister to do because the minister is a professional man upon whom others must lean, and there are usually only one or two in the congregation to whom he can really talk.

Remove the masks

There are two ways of dropping the mask which the church must cultivate, two ways in which the mask is taken off whereby the Love of God which is truly in you and which yearns to come out, can be released: one of them is in prayer and the other one is in person-to-person candor. There are times when the groanings of the heart are too deep and too painful even for words. These groanings, just by being uttered are the most elemental forms of prayer. These are the opening of the soul; it is to say before the face of God, "I do not know who or what I am, or what I can do, but I offer myself before you and I know that you know." The Rabbi was standing at the window when he saw one of his students in great distress rushing across the public square, coming to ask him an agonized question. This young Jew ran up to the top floor, into the Rabbi's study and said, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" The Rabbi held up his hand and said, "I know, my son; and don't you think *God* knows."

The other way of taking off the mask is in the candor of person to person, and this, I am sure, all of you have experienced. When you took off your mask and when you really told another person how you felt, do you remember how he took his off and he told you in return how he felt. It may be that the conversation was largely miserable, but the result of it was healing. Such communication means a revival of power among people, especially among the powerful people whose masks are very thick and very firmly tied on. This kind of candor can release all kinds of power which is otherwise blocked. What is even more important, this kind of candor builds a floor under misery so that a person no longer feels suspended over a bottomless pit.

We recognize the grim fact that all good intentions may come to a tragic end. A person may love and be rebuffed; a person may create and be destroyed; and this is one of our basic anxieties. But again the church is so constituted as to build a floor under this anxiety, and to sustain us in the midst of it. It is expressed in the old phrase, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity". When the defenses fail, then love often flows the most eloquently. We have the classic picture of it at the Last Supper. The meal was a weak, hostile gathering around Jesus. He knew that his closest friends would fail him. He knew that when the heat was turned on these men would flee in all directions and would betray everything he had taught them. He also knew that one of them in particular could not stand his honesty, his openness, his candor, that one of them had been so smitten by this honesty, this openness and candor and could not accept it in himself, that he had built up the toughest, hardest mask of all and had successfully resisted the command of love and was determined to betray his friend to death. A colleague of mine has said that Judas is one of his favorite characters in the Bible because Judas of all people made

(*Continued on page* 15)

Credo

John Cyrus

Mark 9.24: "I believe; help my unbelief."

The shortest answer I can give to anyone who asks, "What do you believe?" is "I believe in living." If I were to extend that simple statement at all, I would say, "I believe in living out my life." This is not a wholly obvious answer because some of us do not believe in living, and most of us at some time are not certain that we do. Neither is it obvious to everyone that this is a religious answer to a religious question. In my opinion it is. To live, or not to live, or, to quote the poet, "To be, or not to be," is the big distinction between religion and irreligion.

On the other hand, if I am asked the question, "What do you believe?" I might very well answer, with another question, "About what?" It is at the same time a pointed and a vague question. We know that it is meant to examine religious belief, but it is a great, general undefined question, too.

How can anyone *know* what his basic beliefs are, if he has *any,* and how can he *say* what they are? We live most of the time and talk most of the time at a relatively superficial level. This does not mean that what we do or say is unimportant. It does mean that we are not aware most of the time of the deepest commitments of our lives and that we do not expect most of the time to be called on to say what lies deepest in our minds and hearts. Indeed, if we set ourselves to say what are the basic beliefs of our lives, we will probably be dissatisfied with our statement of them. What we say is sure to sound less to us than what we mean or feel. Tomorrow we would say it differently.

What is the nature of basic religious belief? I think we have an indication in the words of Paul: "Who can separate us from Christ's love? . . . neither death nor life nor angels nor their hierarchies nor the present nor the future nor any supernatural forces either of height or depth will be able to separate us from the love God has shown in Christ Jesus our Lord." Basic religious belief is that from which we cannot be separated. We might very well not say it as Paul did, but if we could find and state this inseparable element of our lives, we would have our real belief. Any effort we make to state our basic belief is an effort to approach this inseparable element without which we have no life, no integrity, at all.

But any statement of such belief is also a statement of what we *intend* not to be separated from, of what we *intend* to be united with. The story of a father who brought his son to Jesus to be healed also indicates the nature of basic belief. Could Jesus help him? the father wanted to know. "Everything is possible for one who has faith," Jesus answered. Whereupon the father said, "I believe; help my unbelief." This is the most poignant and true picture of most of us that I know. Basic religious belief is also that which we most urgently need and seek.

Still another way of putting it is that what we really believe is that to which all the issues of our lives are referred, that deep commitment by which everything we say or do is judged. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father in heaven," says Jesus. Real belief is what holds our lives together in an honest and integrated whole.

I think of one more indication of what basic religious belief is. It is that which I believe today, and will also believe tomorrow. In short it is what is permanent and durable in us. It is what holds through all the changing statements of belief we may make.

Let us be clear, now, that we are talking about the deepest possession of a mature mind. A three-months-old baby, if it could talk, might say that it believed in milk, or in warmth, or even in *that woman* who often hangs over it, holds it, feeds it and bathes it. We are in search of a different kind of belief from this. Not one which gives us immediate comfort or constant physical care, but one which stands by us when comfort is gone and there is no one to help us. To find this we have got to search our lives. It will not come out of a book. No great creed can disclose it. Even the Bible will not give it to us. No person can hand it to us. We must search our own experience.

Beliefs of ultimate worth

How can one say what it is that his life cannot be separated from, which, at the same time, he lacks and needs, which binds his life together and gives it coherence, and which lasts him not one day but many years? Considering the dif-

ficulties of such a statement, let me attempt an answer for myself.

1. Let me begin by saying that I believe in *reality.* This is not the first belief I found. Perhaps it is the last, the most baffling and unmanageable of all. For what a word is the word *reality!* Do I even know what I mean when I speak it? It is gigantic. How can anyone even use it? What does it refer to? Where does it begin and end? Reality, like the Chinese Tao, is everywhere and nowhere. It is in everything and in nothing. It includes everything and requires nothing that it includes. It is the hardness of the earth and the softness of snow. It is the lace-like elm leaves of early spring. It is the kitchen chairs and the sky filled with stars. It is animal and human life. It is invisible and intangible, too. It is word and thought and feeling. It is obligation and duty. It is the energy of atoms, the wind, and the dawn of a June day. It is power which creates and destroys what it creates.

Reality is what all belief is about. It is *something there* which makes life possible for us, which shapes us, holds us, tests us, limits us, and is also the foundation of our freedom. It is what is inseparable from us, and it is what we try hardest to find. When I speak the words I often speak at the close of our Sunday service—"but let us be assured in our hearts that the truth which will make us free will, in the end, make us glad also"—I am speaking of our endless search for what is real and of my belief in that reality. The truth at any time, in any mind, is our nearest possible approach to reality.

But if it is so indefinable and so hard to find, why believe in it, or why speak of it at all? The pertinence of such belief may be seen in contrast with those who do not believe in it. For there are those who believe in *unreality,* or who *try* to. Some say that reality is unbearable and that one should spend his life trying to escape it. Only live for fantasy, or alcohol, or money, or impossible goals. Only the unreal, they try to say, will not disappoint us. It is easy to see, I think, that what they are living for is only to escape disappointment. Still others try to say that there is no reality at all. There is no *isness* to the world, but it receives whatever shape or description we put upon it, and there is no *isness* to us, but we are whatever we will be.

A few days ago on a bus I heard a strange, shrill whistle. A woman of sixty across from me was whistling a tune and looking straight across at a man of sixty, whom she didn't know from Adam. For all she knew he was Adam. Suddenly she stopped whistling and said loud enough for all the passengers to hear, "All right, I'll whistle another tune if you don't like that one. Anything to please you—you always tried so hard to please me." Then she addressed a few words to everyone on the bus. "You all think I'm crazy, don't you. Well, I am, just like the rest of you. Maybe not as crazy as the rest of you, poisoning all that food. Go ahead, lift your eyebrows; I've seen lifted eyebrows before." She got up and went to the door for the next stop and said, "I'm just as good as any of you, maybe even a little better. Yes, that's it, maybe a little better," and she got off the bus. That was the unreality she settled on for the moment; maybe she *was* really a little better than everybody else. Thus she would give her own shape to reality, and defy it to have any shape of its own.

We can understand her well enough, not to heal her, but for this present purpose. "Downhearted doubters dull and excluded," wrote Walt Whitman. "Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, disheartened, atheistical, I know everyone of you, I know the sea of torment, doubt, despair, and unbelief."

I believe in reality. Is this God, then? That is one name that has been given it, but I am not ready to name it yet. It does not yet deserve to be named God. But it is *something there* that gives us life, holds us, shapes us, tests us, limits us, and supports our freedom if we believe in it.

2. I believe, too, in the *human individual.* Not in all human individuals and not in certain ones only. I believe in what the human individual sometimes is, the dearest part of reality I know, the thinking, speaking, most responsive part of reality. It is Christian, I think, that there is no greater love for God (or reality) than love for the human individual.

But here, too, is a term that has immensity about it. As one asks what is reality, so let him ask what is a *human individual,* and let him not answer quickly. The product of an immeasurable span of time reaching back beyond history and beyond man himself into the foundations of the earth! Indeed, I would not believe in any larger reality if I did not believe first in the human individual. As men discover galaxies or continents, so each of us once discovered the human individual and it was our first great complex revelation of reality. Perhaps this story about one of our members has already gone around, but I will tell it anyway. The man's

wife told me, and I passed it on, but I am pleased to tell it again for this sermon. This man has red hair and wears black shell rim glasses. One day his son asked him, "Dad, what does God look like?" and the man replied, "He has red hair and wears black shell rim glasses." Now this is the first instance I have heard of in which the parent did not grope for an answer to that question. I laughed about it for a long time, and then I began to think seriously. The Psalmist came to my mind: "What *is* man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him? Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor." I hope that boy *will* see God in his father, and that his father will see God *in his son.* For what the human individual sometimes is is the dearest and best part of reality we can know.

Jesus of Nazareth

It is because I believe in the human individual that I can believe in Jesus of Nazareth and that Jesus becomes a part of my basic religious thought. How else can I know anything about him? all that the gospels have to say would mean nothing to me unless, first hand, I had some knowledge of the grandeur, the beauty, the immensity, and the mystery of the human soul. And as for Jesus, so for his ageless contemporaries of every age. I see the great through you; I see the great in you, and in me.

3. I believe, once more, in the absolute power of *wisdom and love* in human experience. These are the great qualities that appear sometimes in the human individual, and, in some measure, sometimes in all of us. What rules the winds, tides and planets, and turns the seasons round is great, but more important for us to know is what rules us. We have a kind of right to take for granted the eternal motion of the great magnitudes of the universe; we cannot take a wise and loving person for granted. When we see a man or woman who is wholly ruled by wisdom and love, we know we are in the presence of something precious and beyond purchase or art.

But why, if this incarnation is so rare, can I say that I believe in the *absolute power* of wisdom and love in our experience. It is because, when we recognize them, they take an absolute command of us. We shall, when we meet a wise and loving person, never be the same again though we do not become wise and loving ourselves. It is because when we live without wisdom and love, all our years are poor and brutish, and life is hateful and short. To know them or not to know them makes the great difference in us, and in all the rest of reality that we know.

Now is the time, as I see it, to consider whether we would give reality a religious name, and enter into that intimate and loving discourse with it which is the heart of religion. For when wisdom and love appear in human life, whether in Jesus or in Albert Schweitzer, or in the care of parent for child or in the mutual regard of friends, then, it seems to me, being becomes God. Inevitably reality moves toward this end in us and is fulfilled, or fails and we had better not have lived. When we know them not, then God is our *need* for wisdom and love. When we reach a *personal* awareness of wisdom and love as the ruling forces in our lives, then God (or reality) becomes personal, and it is in this sense of our experience that we have full right to sing,

"O Life, O Love, in whom we live, . . ".

In wisdom and love reality *speaks* to me, and I to it.

4. Finally, I believe in the *community of the spirit.* We wish to *know* and to *be known* in our personal reality. I believe we can so know and be known. We can, if we choose, live like names in the census, with only numerical meaning; or like machines in a factory, driven by power from an outside source; or like slaves in a galley, working for another's ambition and glory. Or we can discover each other as free beings in search of truth and each other. This is our kingdom of heaven, and it will outlive our wars, our summits, our segregation, and whatever great conflagration or catastrophe may come upon us, for this is the one great goal of mankind, the end for which our cracked genius was made.

Alienation is the great sin

There is one great sin from which all others come. It is alienation. I may alienate myself from all others; I may alienate another from me: this violence committed upon myself or another is the dark hole of hell, and it is because it is so easy to commit that we are never certain in what kindgom we live. All other horror, the physical violence of person against person, the mental torment of another, the great, invented destruction of the new weapons comes from this central sin of alienation of man from man and from himself.

The community of spirit is open to us. We have too much to say of how little we can know of each other and too little acceptance of what we can know. It is a sign of our partial aliena-

tion. The isolated island on which each one of us lives is in fact the great continent on which we all live. No words describe it, but in the community of spirit we recognize it as a continent, not an island. But we cannot enter this community with hammer and crowbar or with deviousness and scheme. Its door is open and we can enter it in silence and directly. The still small voice that came to the prophet after the wind and earthquake is the key. A little wisdom, a little more love, and some courage, and these in no remarkable quantities, will let us in. Then we shall be at home.

These things I believe.

A Prayer

O God, we pray for the lonely, the confused, the heavy of heart who pass by us and live among us and dwell with us. We think of those who light their lamps and sit alone, and who listen for footsteps that never return. Sometimes they long for a friendly chat, for someone to share the simple rounds of the day and to talk of stars and winds and flowers and migrating birds. Let us do for thee, O God, some errand in friendship's name.

We think of the confused of heart and mind who know not whether to go this way or that, who would do this thing were it not for that thing, who would like to push the door that leads to tomorrow, but who cannot. And we think of those who are confused by desire and that thing which is their dearest desire. Especially bless our young people who at the season's turning from Summer's play to the tasks of Autumn go forth from home and hearth and must choose what the quality of their living is to be. Remind them of good and pure and holy memories, of life's little sanctities, of fidelities that make our hearts leap with gladness. Hold them in thy holy care, O God, and keep them from the confusions of many paths.

We think of the heavy-hearted. In this beautiful world of thine, O God, there is so much unhappiness. And why should it be? Keep us from complaining but not from perceiving. Some are heavy-hearted because the hand of death has reached into the magic circle of love and affection and forever broken it. Some are heavy-hearted because the dreams of a brighter time have somewhat been tarnished by time and circumstance until life has no lustre at all. And some are heavy-hearted because they have never learned when to hold on and when to let go and how in this strange, bewildering life of ours sometimes we hold on most securely when we let go most completely. God show us how to bring comfort to those who mourn, hope to those who through many compromises have lost hope, and courage to those who need to let go of the things they most desire to possess.

O God we pray for the lonely and the confused and the heavy of heart. Make us sensitive enough to do the right thing and to choose the best time for deeds done in thy name. Amen.

Pagan Trends In Our Modern Culture

Myron W. Fowell

Increasingly, thoughtful observers of American life remind us of various trends in our national life that represent the symptoms of cultural decline, disintegration and decay. Outstanding among these have been Walter Lippman, Marquis Childs, and Adlai Stevenson. Mr. Stevenson, in an article in the "New York Times", points at the heart of the problem with a disturbing question: "Can an undisciplined people living under a Democracy compete successfully with a highly disciplined people living under an authoritarian form of government?" History has already answered this question many times between the experiences of ancient Greece and modern France. The answer is "no"!

The decline of discipline in our culture is attested by facts such as the following:

The presence among us of five million alcoholics plus ten million problem drinkers with a four per cent increase each year in the number of alcoholics.

The growth of juvenile and adult crime averaging annual increases since 1948 of four and three times respectively the increases registered in the juvenile and adult populations.

The growth of an inordinate public interest in sex with substantial increase in illegitimate births, sex crimes, sex perversion, and the development of a billion dollar a year business in pornography.

The development of extensive underworld organizations employing the methods of big business to exploit human weakness in the interest of profit. These exploitive efforts take from the American people a minimum of forty billion dollars a year through various rackets while contributing additionally to the national crime bill of twenty-two billion dollars and national welfare costs of more than twelve billion dollars.

A vast corruption has come into existence in connection with government, law enforcement, and various forms of public service.

A creeping dishonesty pervades many segments of our economic life and is represented by false advertising, widespread tax evasion, varieties of payola, and padded expense accounts.

John Galbraith of Harvard offers an economic interpretation of some of these trends in our culture by pointing to our obsession for material things.

Cardinal Cushing, in a Lenten Message, analyzed our present cultural crisis as follows: "In the realm of personal ethics, the breakdown of the moral demands which our fathers respected has progressed so far as to make our current American ethic totally incompatible with that of an earlier time. The sacred values which the Christian Church has fostered are not merely challenged, they are in large measure ignored, as if ancient relics of a bygone era. For many they simply no longer apply to the realities of life as we are living it. Instead of creativity, men seek excitement; instead of accomplishment, satiety; instead of happiness, security; instead of virtue, ease; instead of sanctity, adjustment. For the Christian it is a topsy-turvy world and someone must set it right."

My own analysis of the basic reason for these trends is that in our time the church has not been sufficiently responsible for the culture and society around it. It has neglected the prophetic and ethical elements in its teaching with the result that vast numbers of people, including many within the membership of the churches are ignorant of and indifferent to basic ideals and principles, and have substituted for them as principles to live by such pagan myths as the following:

"You can't change human nature."

"Everybody is doing it so it must be right."

"It does not matter what you believe."

"Victory is on the side of the largest battalions —we must spend more for national defense."

"If you let THEM in, property values will go down."

"All of life is a gamble."

"It's all right if you're in love."

A great new educational emphasis, developed by the churches and directed toward the community, re what it means to be a religious person in the kind of world we live in is an emergency need of our time. Evangelism, social action and education all need to be more deeply involved in this gigantic task.

As adapted by The Universalist Trumpet from a paper by the Rev. Myron W. Fowell, given before the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Council of Churches.

ESSAYS IN UNITARIAN THEOLOGY — A SYMPOSIUM, ed. by Kenneth Twinn. Lindsey Press, London. 1959.

Not since the invaluable *Studies in Theology* by J. Estlin Carpenter and P. H. Wicksteed, published in 1903, have the British Unitarians offered such a comprehensive and scholarly examination of the classical tradition of Unitarian Christianity. Such a project as this has long been needed on both sides of the Atlantic, and it is hoped that this volume will be but the first clarion call awakening Unitarians to a systematic understanding of their faith. Composed in response to the Council of the General Assembly, these eight essays represent the deliberations of a commission which reviewed some of the most pressing theological issues now current in the religious world.

It would be misleading however to characterize these essays as merely variations on a single theme. Each author presents a singular viewpoint, but together they are a "symposium" of various approaches within the Unitarian household of faith. All of the essays in varying degrees, with but the single exception of Leonard Mason's *Images of God,* advocate a liberal Christian commitment to the God revealed through Jesus Christ. Mr. Mason's essay is unique in this collection, in that it espouses a humanistic point of view, but with a dimension of depth which is unusual among humanists on this side of the Atlantic.

Kenneth Twinn's *A Personal Affirmation* is the first paper, and it wisely leads the others by being confessional and synoptic. It should be compared with Mr. Mendelsohn's *Why I Am A Unitarian,* which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. The second paper, *Belief in God* by Arthur J. Long, skillfully argues the empirical approach of F. R. Tennant's *Philosophic Theology,* offering at least five arguments drawn from the inorganic, organic and human world for the existence of God as " 'a supreme mind or intelligence behind and within the universe, an infinite being akin to the human soul, and one in whom the highest human values are eternally grounded.' "

The able editor of the *Inquirer* (the British Unitarian weekly) E. G. Lee offers a penetrating analysis of *The Loneliness of Man* which leads man on to the revelation of God. Suggesting that "for many, traditional Christianity no longer responds to this situation" (human aloneness), Mr. Lee espouses "the religious solution within a Christian religion that affirms belief in God and a human Jesus of Nazareth."

One of the most difficult, and just as equally rewarding essays, is the paper entitled *Scientific and Religious Language* by H. Lismer Short, the Warden and Librarian of Manchester College, Oxford. Mr. Short comes to grips with the problem of what religious language means in a universe ruled by scientific laws. Reviewing the past warfare between science and theology, he sees the value as well as the naivete of linguistic analysis which reduces religious affirmations to merely emotional responses. According to Mr. Short the primary function of religion is "to enable man to orient himself to his situation, that is, to make judgements and to act upon them." This involves man in a particular religion which alone is real religion. "A general religiousness is of little use in the world; a real religion tells its adherents to do this and not to do that, or that this is the best 'model' for understanding their situation and not that; it recommends this association, loyalty and ritual, as the one needed, rather than that. . . . I do not make a personal religion out of my private experience, and then go out to find if there are others who think the same way; the group-religion, with its developed language, is always prior to the religion of an individual, however original he may be." For Mr. Short the "group-religion" which recommends itself is Unitarian Christianity.

Where Mr. Short leaves off, Principal L. A. Garrard of Manchester College, (and the editor of *The Hibbert Journal*) continues the argument in *What is Christianity? A Linguistic Inquiry.* "Christianity demands commitment . . . in the form of discipleship to a particular historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth. To the Christian it has always seemed that loving behavior was the consequence of his belief in a God who demanded it and showed it, especially in sending Jesus to give a living example of a life of love; indeed, the behavior is a test of the genuineness of the belief." Principal Garrard disclaims all attempts to reduce Christianity merely to a code of ethics divorced from the life of its founder, and criticizes from history "ideal eclectric systems", none of which "has ever possessed the vitality necessary

for survival". The essence of the Christian experience is seen as "a life oriented towards a God who is best thought of in terms of the symbolism of the family, as a father who expects his children to treat other members of the family as brothers, and a consciousness also that God has shown his love by speaking to us in Jesus and through him reconciling us to himself."

The question of the "historical" Jesus is treated by Principal Fred Kenworthy of the Unitarian College in Manchester in *Jesus and the Gospel.* Examining the recent findings in New Testament scholarship, and sifting the various strands of evidence, Principal Kenworthy rejects the skeptical view which maintains that Jesus is wholly unknowable beneath the accumulated traditions which have grown up around him. "In spite of all the problems that surround the Gospels, they do give us a vivid picture of the personality of Jesus. . . The claim of Christianity to be an historical religion, and to have its foundation in the life, teaching and death of one who was supremely what he taught, is soundly based." This conclusion is related to our common religious problems—the difficulty of putting into practise what we do know—"That is the supreme difficulty. And that is why the life, teaching, and death of Jesus Christ remain for us an imperishable standard against which we in the West must always judge and measure our attainments."

In the final essay in this collection *Theological Liberalism: A Vindication,* C. Gordon Bolam rehearses some of the reasons why theological liberalism has fallen under a cloud as well as the ever-essential task of the liberal thinker who ". . . takes the equipment which the modern world provides and seeks to expound a Christian truth as intelligible and significant in the situation in which men now find themselves. . . It is the attempt to harmonize the complementary nature of perceiving the truth in Christ and living that perceived truth as personal encounter where in the Johannine sense we must do the truth, be the truth." Employing an existential approach, Mr. Bolam sees the Unitarian quest as a "recognition of the need of an ideal for the individual." This is actualized in Jesus as the Son of Man, "the type-figure of Christian humanism." Secondly, Unitarianism recognizes that "religion must set forth a vision for society." This is seen at various levels as the Kingdom of God and the basis of fellowship in the church. Thirdly, Unitarianism recognizes that an imaginative awareness of God has collapsed for modern man. This is the great task of liberal theology and of liberal religion, to respond to God in the here and now. "The liberal is not projecting his subjectivism on to God, he responds with love to love."

Together these essays are an eloquent testimony of the vitality of liberal religion to meet the challenges presented against it on two fronts, that of scientific humanism and of neo-orthodoxy. They should certainly be studied here in the United States by both ministers and laymen, as a corrective balance to the prevailing winds of doctrine. As the most recent serious Unitarian thinking, these essays deserve our widest audience and our heartiest endorsement.

Harry M. Stokes

WHY I AM A UNITARIAN, by Jack Mendelsohn. Nelson, New York. 1960.

The Rev. Jack Mendelsohn, minister of the Arlington Street Church in Boston, has provided our denomination with a life-sized portrait of an individual Unitarian—himself. In this able presentation of his religious autobiography, Mr. Mendelsohn's conception of contemporary Unitarianism reflects both the strength and the weaknesses of religious liberalism. Because many Unitarians and would-be-Unitarians are likely to turn to this book for information regarding the direction which our "free faith" seems to be taking, this reviewer feels that the book's weaknesses (as they seem to reflect the denomination's weaknesses) deserve as much attention as its strengths (so effusively praised in the review of Mr. Edward Darling, *Unitarian Register,* May 1960).

The personality which emerges from the pages of *Why I Am A Unitarian* is extremely engaging; Mr. Mendelsohn is a man of warmth, charm and wit who has shaped a religious point of view from a multitude of personal experiences and expeditions. However, the very nature of the book and the fact that it is included in the Nelson "Why I Am" series bespeaks its denominational purpose. Mr. Mendelsohn has taken upon himself the difficult task of presenting Unitarianism-at-large (even to the inclusion of a chapter dealing with the tenets of Universalism and the gradual course of denominational consolidation). In this propagandistic undertaking the author demonstrates considerable courage, but the appealing subjectivism of his approach should not be allowed to obscure the pietism which has ever

been the shame of the "man-centered" theology upon which Mr. Mendelsohn's personal religious perspective and in his opinion, current Unitarianism rests. In vigorously affirming his belief in the capacity of the individual to respond positively to religious and social challenges; in his belief that the individual can, by dependence upon reason, know joy and fulfillment, Mr. Mendelsohn's humanism is most captivating. However, the emphasis upon individualism underscores the implicit egocentricity which has ever stalked our denomination.

The emphasis placed upon the individual all but eradicates the work and purpose of the institution in Mr. Mendelsohn's thinking. "The atmosphere of a Unitarian church encourages each person to make his best contribution to the group's enrichment. The emphasis is on sharing the results of personal thought and evaluation."(p.39). The church, according to this view, bears greater resemblance to a workshop than to a worshiping community. This view would seem to be born out by the fact that Mr. Mendelsohn is able to deliver his view of the church in three pages (p.38-40) while devoting some twenty-five pages to the programs of social action and outreach which the denomination has endorsed and/or sponsored (chapter nine: "What a Few Can Do"). The work of the various committees and organizations is indeed a proud chapter in the life of Unitarianism as it is in *Why I Am A Unitarian,* but such a presentation resembles nothing so much as the tail wagging the dog.

In the chapter entitled "Christian or more than Christian", the author makes the statement that "it is extremely important for us to *know* what *we* are talking about."(p.69). In the same paragraph he makes the statement that Unitarians "have no special myths to defend, no creeds to enforce" and that "we are open to all that is ethically best in the world's religions, and through freedom, reason, and tolerance we feel prepared to touch each of the great faiths and draw together their moral fervor." This reviewer is in complete agreement with the first statement and, because he agrees, he is prompted to ask the basis for judgement of what is "ethically best in the world's religions". Mr. Mendelsohn leaves this question unasked and unanswered. Prompted by the same demand that we know what we are talking about, this reviewer is given to wondering how the author justifies the use of such phrases as "inner man" (p.103), "universal man" (p.143) and "the dignity of human nature" (p.109), particularly since he insists that Unitarians "have no special myths to defend". The fact is that Mr. Mendelsohn's Unitarianism is studded with myths; myths that play such an important part in the popular jargon of contemporary liberalism that, presumably, it's not necessary to ask for explanations of their meaning.

Why I Am A Unitarian deserves to be read as representative of one point of view within the spectrum of contemporary Unitarianism. As such it fills the need for a popular statement of our denominational affairs and interests and, for this reason should be gratefully accepted. It's high time that the mileage of the popular pamphlet "Fourteen Journeys To Unitarianism" was extended.

—Victor H. Carpenter, Jr.

Important Notice

1961: I.A.R.F. CONGRESS AT DAVOS, SWITZERLAND

At the annual meeting of the Executive Committee of the "International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, IARF" which was held in Paris last July, preparations were made for the next triennial congress of the Association. Theme of this congress is to be:

THE UNITY OF MANKIND IN OUR DIVIDED WORLD

and it will be held in Davos, Switzerland, from August 8th through 13th, 1961. Representatives of all world religions are expected from Europe, America, Asia, and Africa. Members of various religions and from many parts of the world have been invited as speakers for the main addresses and panels. They will give their vision on the problems connected with the above mentioned theme, including the views of the Western world on Asia and Africa as well as those of Asia and Africa on the West. Some 600 participants from all over the world are expected.

In Paris plans have also been worked out for smaller gatherings at a number of Universities in Europe and elsewhere in order to let interdisciplinary, interfaith groups study the congress theme beforehand.

Further information can be obtained from the IARF Secretariat, 40 Laan Copes van Cattenburch, The Hague, Netherlands.

Editorial

(*Continued from page* 2)

tion that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God."

"Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."

"It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proved by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

Introducing Our Contributors

John W. Cyrus is minister of the First Unitarian Church of Milwaukee, Wisconsin where he was settled in 1956 after serving in the ministry of the Disciples of Christ and as minister of the Unitarian Church of Omaha, Nebraska.

John F. Hayward, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Philosophical Theology at the Meadville Theological School where he has been since 1951. He holds degrees from Harvard College, Meadville, and the University of Chicago. He is the Minns Lecturer for 1960.

Myron W. Fowell is staff member of the Massachusetts Congregational Christian Convention and Chairman of the Department of Social Relations of the Massachusetts Council of Churches.

A Cultural Being

(*Continued from page* 6)

a very difficult choice, a choice against opening himself, against taking all his own defenses down, in the face of the man who urged him so to do. Therefore he *had* to slay this man, who by his life constantly confronted him with openness and demanded that he also be open. Jesus knew all this as he faced these people who were breaking bread with him. What did he do? There were no Hollywood pyrotechnics here; he did not get up and give them a tongue lashing which would have gone down in history as one of the greatest speeches of all times, quoted from every pulpit. Nor did he exhort them, "Have courage, I know this is tough! Let's slug it through together!" No, he took down all his defenses and said to them, "Look, I am through! This is the end!" Then he said "Some of you will deny me and one of you will betray me. Let's not cover up the truth." But, what were his last words? His last word was a word of acceptance and forgiveness saying that every time they break bread and drink wine they will remember him and will be strengthened and will know that the end is not yet. All the disciples accepted forgiveness except one, Judas, and he committed suicide. He had no choice. The others took his censure and betrayed him and lived to be forgiven. Some of them died their own heroic deaths. Jesus died in gratitude for the Love of God, a gratitude which was much stronger than any disappointment he may have felt for the perfidy of man. In fact, he saw a love of God still resident in the betrayers who sat around the table with him. The measure of a man's faith is seen at the time that death surprises him, when he is still able to utter forth a song of praise. What was the last thing that was done at the Last Supper? Before they went to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemene which was the place of pain and suffering, they sang a hymn, they uttered forth a song of praise and gratitude, and they sang it together.

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